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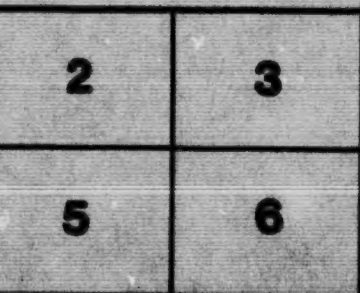
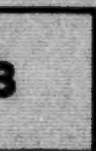
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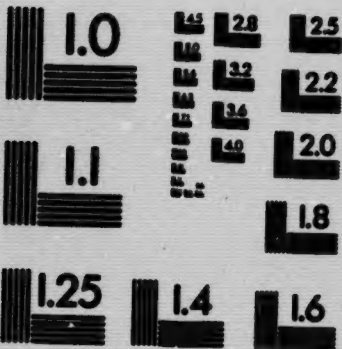
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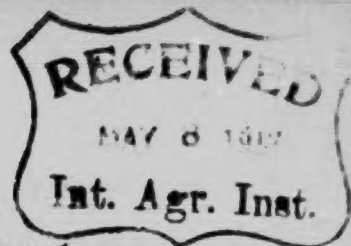
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Government of the Province of Saskatchewan
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Care, Feeding and Management of Beef Cattle

In the Canadian West slowly and surely the more or less wasteful methods of the big ranches are giving way to the more careful and economical ways of the farmer and feeder. The farmer is able to feed and finish his steers during the winter months, while the big rancher formerly used to sell his cattle direct from the range in a semi-ready market condition. As mixed farming becomes more general the farmer will depend on his own acres for the production of feed, and will utilise it to the best advantage by feeding and selling it in the most profitable form, namely, live stock.

Selection of Sire.

One of the most important steps in the breeding of beef cattle is the selection of a sire. The sire must be of pure breeding, and approved beef type, must possess the best characteristics of the breed he represents, must have rugged constitution and pronounced masculinity. The choice of breeds is optional and depends largely on surrounding circumstances and the inclination of the breeder. Herefords and Galloways are prepotent and are splendid rustlers, suitable for range conditions and open lot and winter feeding. The Hereford has the advantage in size and early maturity; the Galloway in the possession of an extra heavy coat and the lack of horns. Aberdeen-Angus are noted for their feeding and finishing qualities. Shorthorns for their size, substance and general utility. The breed is not of such great importance as the selection of a bull combining as largely as possible good breeding and strong conformation. Where care is exercised in this regard a pure bred sire from any of the best known beef breeds will give good results.

Grading Up.

It is always advisable to stay with sires of one breed if possible at all. This is known as "grading up." By this means the scrub or less valuable blood in a herd is reduced and the more valuable known blood lines increased. This tends to increase the prepotency of the females which are more likely to throw good beef stock. When one realises that in five generations or, roughly speaking, twelve or fourteen years, commencing with a pure bred bull on the one side and an utter scrub on the other, the amount of scrub blood may be reduced in the offspring to one-thirty-second the value of this process is apparent.

Beef Cattle Type.

Animals of correct beef type should have blocky, wide, deep, low set bodies with straight top and underline, bodies, in fact, as rectangular as possible from a side view. They should possess strong constitution as evinced by a short broad head, bright full eye, wide muzzle, and large nostrils, by well-sprung long ribs and deep wide chests. Long legged, shallow-bodied upstanding animals are known as "rangy" or "leggy" and make rough unprofitable steers. Common weaknesses in beef sires are lack of constitution and masculinity, lack of width behind the shoulders (narrow crops), lack of depth of heart (tucked-up fore flank), flat ribs, lowness of back, narrow, shallow loin, narrow peaked hind quarters, lack of width and depth of thighs and weak, crooked hind legs. These should be avoided or at least a combination of them.

Smoothness and uniformity are essential in an animal of true beef type. Uniform width and depth of body, evenness of fleshing (no blubbery patches here and bare spots there) and quality of bone, meat and hide are also sought after. Quality is gauged by the hair which should be soft and mossy, by the skin which should be mellow, elastic, thin and pliable and by the general appearance of the animal shown in the head, bone and joints. Animals with harsh, dry hair and tight, thick skin either show lack of breeding or lack of condition.

Calves.

Having obtained a good foundation in type, one of the most important matters in connection with successful beef raising is the rearing of the calves. Housing, bedding and feed must all be closely watched so that there will be nothing to retard growth. If a calf loses flesh it is most difficult to make this up again. They should receive no set-back. Under our climatic conditions the cows should be bred late enough to insure favourable weather for the new born calf. If calves are dropped about May they will do well with their dams on grass for the rest of the season, but on the open prairie they should be afforded shelter during the late fall, if only in an open shed, and should be comfortably housed at night or during bad weather through the winter.

The critical time for all domestic animals is the weaning time and the winter that follows. Once on good grass in their yearling form they are pretty well able to take care of themselves. In the rearing stage a bunch of eight or ten will do well together. Keep the calves growing. If they are running with the cows, see that the cows have ample pasturage and pure water. If the pasture is scanty supplement it with green bundles, green corn or a light grain ration. If the calves are not with the cows teach them to eat chop as soon as possible, three parts oat chop to one part barley chop with a little ground flax or oil meal added makes a valuable ration. Keep the chop box clean and sweet; feed both cows and calves regularly. Work quietly when among them. If pail feeding, never feed sour or cold milk. Scours in calves are easy to start and hard to stop. If your milk supply is limited supplement with a little flax porridge till the calf is a month old. For the first winter, feed well. A light grain ration twice or even once a day, clean wholesome roughage such as green oat sheaves, cut or whole; well-cured prairie hay and when you can, alfalfa. Don't expect the calf to winter well, to grow quickly, to keep in condition

and make a profitable steer on a five months' diet of oat straw and water. Remember the first winter counts. Keep the stall clean. Give lots of bedding. Calves, like children, are always hungry; feed less at a time and more often. When male calves are not intended for service it is advisable to castrate them when they are from two to six weeks old.

Care During the Second Winter.

Avoid the continual use of one feed. Don't make it three straight with oat or wheat straw. If you are going to keep cattle, use a little forethought for the winter and if you can't get wild hay, grow tame hay or green oats or corn. With beef over 6 cents it is a straight business proposition, profit or loss. Remember that the gains made by cattle during the first eighteen months of their lives are made at two-thirds the cost of gains made from then to the three-year-old stage.

The practice is far too common of allowing the yearling cattle to rustle for themselves with the rest of the herd during the second winter of their lives. They may grow tall and assume a rough frame but this is not developing a good beef animal and time is really being lost. The profits of the beef industry lie in being able to produce pounds of beef economically at an early age. Many steers might easily be matured a year sooner if given a grain ration that would help them lay on two pounds of flesh every day rather than lose what they had already developed. Here again oat sheaves can be used with profit.

Fattening.

A line of demarcation exists between the maintenance of an animal and the fattening stage. While it is true that fattening may take place at any age, and also true that there is a greater demand for material for growth in the young animal which tends to reduce the proportion of food available for fattening, it is nevertheless established that it is advantageous to feed young stock. Young animals respond rapidly to good feeding because they have a notable power of storing up protein, a power which diminishes with increasing age, and this rapid gain in live weight is composed largely of that which the producer is aiming for, viz.: the correct kind of meat, so that the great economic advantage of feeding young animals becomes clear. A young animal is very much like a labour saving machine fitted out with the latest devices for extracting from, and making the most of, everything of value in the material supplied to it.

The more rapid production due to heavier feeding by hastening the completion of the fattening process shortens the time during which the maintenance ration must be paid for, but discretion is necessary so that the digestive organs of the animal may not be disturbed.

The man who produces beef must study the demands of the market. The home market prefers animals in their two year old form weighing 1,200 to 1,400 pounds, while the exporter calls for smooth even fleshing of the three and four year old cattle in their 1,600 to 1,800 pound form.

Baby beef commands long prices and the experimental stations find that the yearling and two-year old beeves are the most economical to produce.

Steer feeding will appeal to many people as a possible means of obtaining higher prices for their grain.

In fattening there are several things to be remembered. Don't feed too heavily at first. Start gradually and work up. The animals will do the same. Feed regularly. Vary your feed as much as possible. Clean stalls, ample bedding and half rations are better than dirt, no bedding and full feed. *We have the bedding in Saskatchewan. Don't be afraid to use it.* Cattle that are kept thirsty never do well. Warmth is necessary and ventilation is essential. For outside winter feeding, especially with animals two years old and over, barley chop is a splendid fattening grain.

Taking the summary of five years' experiments in "outside" versus "inside" fattening at the Brandon, Manitoba, Experimental Farm, the prices obtained for oats and barley by feeding them to steers were as follows: Oats fed to outside steers realised 56 cents per bushel.

Oats fed to inside steers realised 71 cents per bushel.

Barley fed to outside steers realised 79 cents per bushel.

Barley fed to inside steers realised 100 cents per bushel.

Labour was not charged against these prices, and it would of course cost more to attend to the indoor steers. The manure is however taken into consideration, and while that outside would be scattered over a wide area, the inside manure is of value and can be charged against extra labour on a basis of \$1 per ton applied. Those who are not in a position to realise on the fertiliser value of farm yard manure should charge the labour against the cattle at current wages.

In the early stages of feeding the rations must be used with care and judgment. The grain rations must be given only a few pounds for each head for the first week, gradually increasing it as the cattle are able to handle it and still keep a keen appetite. Many feeders grow feeds and feed mixtures for their own use. Oats and barley can be sown together and will be ready mixed for grinding.

Rations.

A useful ration fed at the Experimental Station, Lacombe, Alta., is made up with wheat, oats and barley mixed in the proportion of one-fifth wheat, two-fifths barley and two-fifths oats finely ground. The cattle were also fed green feed and salt. The chop was charged at one cent per pound. The green feed at \$10 per ton, hay at \$10 per ton and salt at cost.

A ration used at the Brandon Experimental Station consisted of silage, straw, hay, a few roots and some grain. The grain ration at the start consisted of two pounds of a mixture of oats, barley and feed wheat and two pounds of bran. This was increased from time to time until at the first of April each steer was receiving daily ten pounds of grain and two pounds of bran.

General Remarks.

Where cattle are not being stall fed, even where there is a good natural shelter, cattle will do better with a roughly improvised shed in which they can lie down during a storm. They must be provided with all the water they need and plenty of bedding. Attention to detail is essential to secure the best results in feeding cattle. Solid comfort will induce the cattle to lie down and when they are quietly chewing their cud they are making the most money for the feeder.

